

**REMARKS**

Claims 6, 8, 22, 26, and 29 are amended herein and new Claims 30-31 are presented.

Claims 27-28 are cancelled herein. Therefore with this amendment, Claims 2-16, 18-23, 25, 26, and 29-31 are currently pending and under examination.

Support for the amendments to the claims and the new claims can be found as follows.

Support for the amendment to Claim 6 is found in Claim 27 that is cancelled herein. Claims 8 and 22 are amended to address clerical issues and/or to more closely conform these claims to U.S. patent practice. Claim 26 is amended to incorporate the features of Claim 29, therefore support for this amendment is found in Claim 29. Support for the amendment to Claim 29 can be found at least on page 7 of the specification. Claims 30 and 31 constitute the subject matter of cancelled Claims 27 and 28 and are rewritten to depend from Claim 29.

**Telephonic Interview with Patent Examiner**

On July 11, 2005, Applicants' undersigned representative conducted a telephonic interview with Patent Examiner Cole, regarding the final Office Action dated June 21, 2005. Claim 29 is amended on the basis of the telephonic interview to recite a cover layer consisting of the provided elements. Support for this claim can be found at least on page 7 of the specification. Applicants and their representatives thank Examiner Cole for conducting this interview and for the helpful discussion and suggestions.

**Rejection of Claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103**

In the June 21, 2005 Office Action, the Patent and Trademark Office (“PTO”) maintained the previous rejection of Claims 2-16, 18-23, and 25-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). According to the PTO, these claims are unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,747,133 to *Vinod, et al.* (“*Vinod*”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,932,337 to *Edinger, et al.* (“*Edinger*”), as set forth in the Office Action dated October 13, 2004. In view of the amendment to Claim 29, Applicants maintain that the rejection of Claims 2-16, 18-23, and 25-29 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been obviated.

Respectfully, Applicants maintain that *Vinod* and *Edinger*, either alone or in combination, do not support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, and even if combined, do not teach or suggest Applicants’ claimed invention. The PTO has stated that *Vinod* teaches selecting the fabric base in order to ensure it has sufficient strength, elongation, dimensional stability and puncture resistance, and therefore it would have been obvious to have optimized the basis weight of the fabric to provide the necessary strength and stability (paragraph 4, March 31, 2004, Office Action). However, *Vinod* clearly distinguishes between fabric base which is embedded within the plastic matrix and fabric base is adhered beneath the plastic matrix (column 2, lines 15-24), and specifically discloses basis weight as result effective only when the fabric base forms a separate stabilizing layer, beneath the plastic matrix. Respectfully, Applicants maintain that the *prima facie* case of obviousness has not been met.

However, in an effort to further the prosecution of this application, Applicants have amended Claim 29 to recite a cover layer consisting of the provided elements. Applicants reserve the right to prosecute original claims in this application in a continuing application.

Amendments and Remarks in Response to Final Office Action dated June 21, 2005

Serial No. 09/719,326 (*National Phase of PCT/EP99/04419*)

317 Filing Date: February 23, 2001

Page 11 of 12

Respectfully, Applicants maintain that the amendment to Claim 29 have obviated this rejection, and request this rejection be withdrawn and these claims allowed.

**CONCLUSION**

Applicants believe this Amendment and Response places the claims in condition for allowance, and such action is respectfully requested. Applicant reserves the right to subsequently take up prosecution of the claims originally filed in this application in continuation, continuation-in-part, and/or divisional applications.

This Amendment and Response is being filed within two (2) months of the final action, therefore Applicants request that an Advisory Action be issued in this case.

No additional fees are believed due, however, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any deficiencies which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account Number 09-0528, referencing matter number 41461.0012.6.

Early and favorable consideration is respectfully solicited. If the Examiner believes any informalities remain in the application that can be resolved by telephone interview, a telephone call to the undersigned attorney is requested.

Respectfully submitted,



David E. Wigley, Ph.D.  
Reg. No. 52,362  
Customer No. 26158

WOMBLE CARLYLE SANDRIDGE & RICE, PLLC  
P.O. Box 7037  
Atlanta, GA 30357-0037  
(404) 872-7000 (Firm)  
(404) 879-2435 (Direct Telephone)  
(404) 879-2935 (Facsimile)

Attorney Docket No. D078 1110 (41461.0012.6)